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BELGIUM

I. Status and Strength of the Communist Party

The Belgian CP's estimated membership is 12,000. The Party polled only 184,108 votes (3.57%) in the last national parliamentary elections of April 1954. The industrial and mining areas of Liege and Hainaut provinces remain the centers of Party strength. Some Communist-dominated locals with an estimated strength of not more than 25,000 exist in the Socialist labor organization, particularly among public service workers, dockers in Antwerp, metal workers, and white-collar workers. The two Communist unions for stone workers and miners were estimated to total not more than 1,500 members in 1957.

II. Party Units Responsible for Sabotage, Assassination, Kidnapping or Terrorist Missions

There is no information available about Party units responsible for sabotage, terrorism, etc. Presumably, in common with most CP's of the West, the Belgian CP is equipped with organized militant action groups which could be activated upon short notice.

III. Training Given within Belgium in Sabotage, Terrorism, etc.

There is no evidence that Belgian Communists have been or are being trained in sabotage, terrorism, etc. within Belgium.

IV. Training Given for Belgian Communists in Sabotage in Communist Bloc Countries

There is no evidence that Belgian Communists are being trained in Communist bloc countries for future sabotage action sponsored by the Belgian CP.

V. Sabotage Targets

a. US and or US Allies Personnel, Installations

No available information shows Communist sabotage directed

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against U.S. personnel or installations in Belgium.

b. Other Sabotage Targets: Widespread Strike Action Causing Sabotage of the Belgian Economy

Belgian Communists fell into line with the CPSU/Cominform call for use of aggressive tactics and engaged in more militant action in early 1948. Coal miners and other workers were agitating for higher wages which were apparently justified and Communists exploited their grievances by urging the spread and continuation of strikes while non-Communist trade union leaders were trying to persuade miners to go back to work pending negotiations with the government. Small groups of Communist agitators, going from pit to pit, urged walk-outs. On 12 February a Social Democrat trade union leader was beaten up by Communists.

On 12 February 1948 the strikes spread to several gas and electricity plants where Communist-led unions refused to withdraw strike orders issued the previous day. Having no power, many factories were forced to close.

On 16 February thousands of miners went back to work but Communists were trying to provoke a strike among streetcar employees, and prepared for a general strike to take place on 18 February. Leaflets distributed in industrial regions read: "Spaak (the Premier) means Misery" and "Marshall Plan means Unemployment." Agitators were able to get about 800 streetcar workers out of a total of 2,500 to strike.

VI. Evidence of Direction and Support from the USSR, China or Other Communist Country

There is no evidence of Soviet direction or support of specific Belgian CP sabotage or violent action, other than the fact that the Belgian CP initiated such action after Zahdanov's call for greater use of militancy at the Founding Conference of the Cominform in September 1947.

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IX. Estimate of Threat from Local Communist Party Sabotage,  
Terrorism, etc.

In view of the Belgian CP's very small membership sabotage or other violent action would probably be initiated (as in the past) only in response to a Soviet global requirement. In view of the centers of Party strength, and in view of the events of 1948, it is probable that most vulnerable areas are certain mining and industrial areas (Liege and Hainaut), some public transport systems, the Antwerp dock areas and some segments of the metallurgical industry.

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